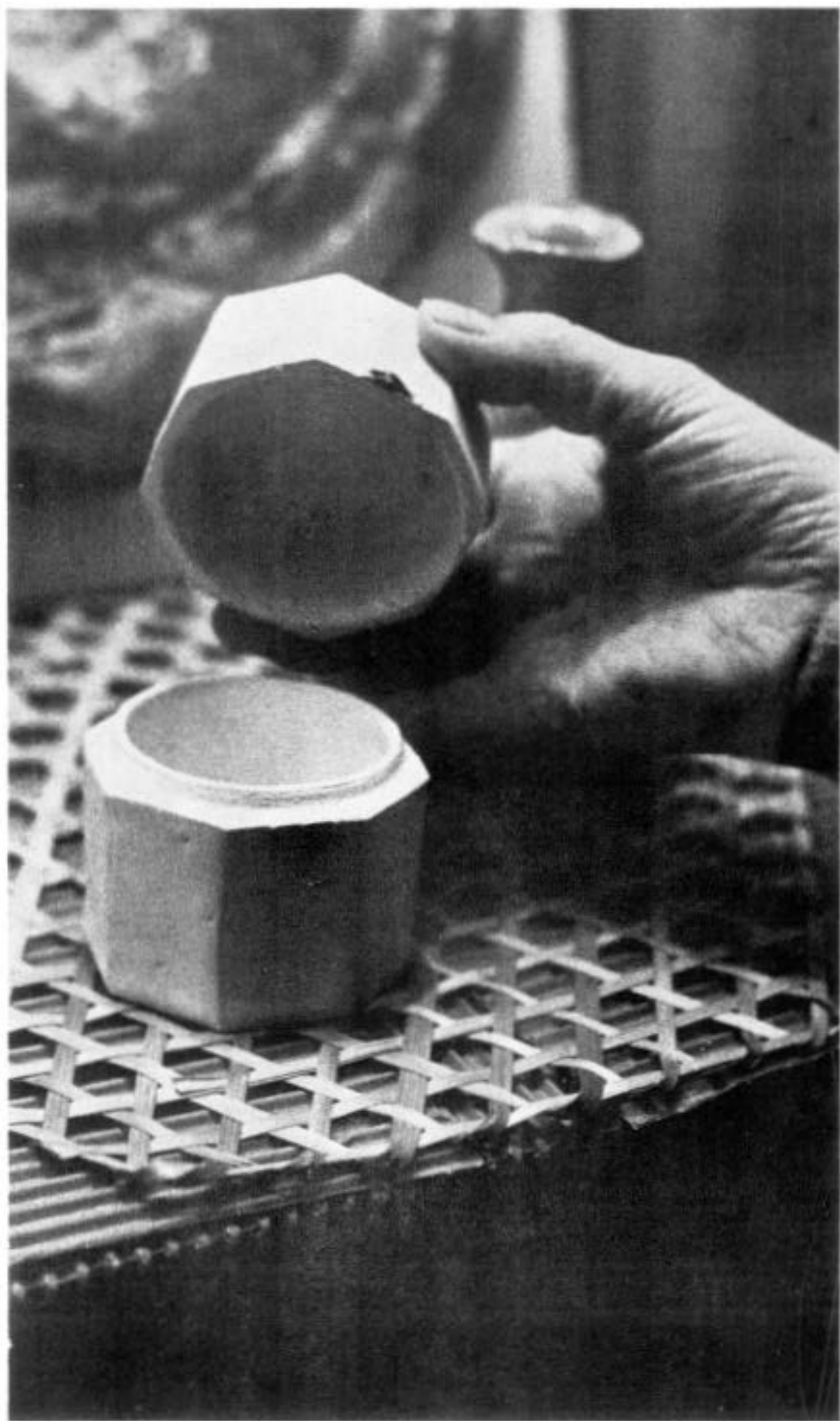



# WESTERN POTTER

# 17 1970 Spring





Hand Craft

Lidded Pot

Jean Fahrni

EDITORIAL

I was Given - in a gift-wrapped outhouse - two pairs of pigeons for Christmas. One pair has a beautiful subtle Persian lustre on their throats - silver lustre - and in an endeavour to find suitable names I read the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam again. And found these verses:

XXXVI

For in the Market-place, one Dusk of Day,  
I watch'd the Potter thumping his wet Clay;  
And with its all obliterated Tongue  
It murmur'd "Gently, Brother, gently,  
pray".

LIII

With Earth's first Clay They did the Last Man's Knead,  
And then of the Last Harvest sow'd the Seed;  
Yea, the first Morning of Creation wrote  
What the Last Dawn of Reckoning shall read.

LIX

Listen again. One evening at the Close  
Of Ramazan, ere the better Moon arose,  
In that old Potters Shop I stood alone  
With the Clay Population round in Rows.

LX

And, strange to tell, among the Earthern Lot  
Some could articulate, while others not;  
And suddenly one more impatient cried -  
"Who IS the Potter, pray, and who the Pot?"

LXI

Then said another "Surely not in vain  
My substance from the common Earth was Ta'en  
That He who subtly wrought me into Shape  
Should stamp me back to common Earth again."

LXII

Another said "Why, ne'er a peevish Boy,  
Would break the Bowl form which he drank in Joy;  
Shall He that made the vessel in Pure Love  
and Fancy, in an after Rage destroy."

LXIII

None answered this; but after Silence spake  
a Vessel of a more ungainly make:  
"They sneer at me for leaning all awry;  
What! did the hand then of the Potter shake?"

LXIV

Said one "Folks of a surly Tapster tell,  
and Daub his visage with the smoke of Hell;  
They talk of some strict Testing of us - Pish!  
He's a Good Fellow, and 'twill all be well".

LXV

Then said another with a long drawn sigh,  
"My Clay with long oblivion is gone dry:  
But, fill me with the old familiar Juice,  
Methinks, I might recover by and by!"

XXXV

Then to the lip of this poor earthen Urn  
I lean'd, the Secret of my life to learn;  
And Lip to Lip it murmur'd "While you live  
Drink! for once dead, you never will return".

Editor

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Thought it might be interesting to discover who is teaching and where and what and why. This is the first of a series ...

### Reg Dixon. Vancouver School of Art

Teaching can be many things - demonstration, indoctrination, an opportunity for each student to do his thing. Teaching can be an easy way of making a living or it can be a real commitment to a way of life.

Teaching art and particularly pottery is a very complex and subtle procedure. The making of a good pot demands so much from the student: manual dexterity, exact control, aesthetics, chemistry, geology, kilns etc.; at best it calls for almost total involvement in process and medium.

I have given courses in pottery in Canada, England, Italy, Paraguay and Brazil - children from five years old, old ladies, even blind people, and one thing has emerged - each individual is unique, in ability, work patterns, psychological hang-ups, ambitions and so-on. This makes a large class situation difficult and calls for great awareness and involvement on the part of the instructor.

So what happens at the VSA? The conditions are far from optimal - space is very restricted, delays in deliveries of equipment etc. and too many students - but to my mind perfect conditions, while important for production, can even be detrimental to learning.

The diploma course at VSA is four years and from the second year on a student is free to choose his own programme - painting, sculpture, plastics, commercial etc. The pottery is very popular these days, in fact some 45 students have elected to take pottery this year. So who gets in? I feel it would be playing God to say you can become a potter but not you or you! So everyone comes, some for only one day a week.

- Take a handful of clay - make something, feel it. Can you become involved in this or are you thinking of making a Christmas present for Aunt Amy?

- Try the wheel, it works like this.

Slowly a pattern evolves, some go fast, some slow, some drop out. Without a commitment, an involvement, nothing happens so better make way for someone else and find yourself a meaning somewhere.

The more advanced students come any time - all day. Let's discuss a programme for you - create your own discipline.

- Then there's this feldspar K2O; Al2O3; 6SiO2 - the chemistry of oxides, R2O3 R2O, it's beautifully simple.

- You have to project yourself into your hands and fingertips - concentrate and live the doing of it - If you don't want to do it - do something else. I'm not here to see that you make acceptable pots. I'm here to help you learn and here are the equipment and materials - make the most of it and you can learn from failures as well as successes. Be sensitive to what is happening - throwing, glazing, firing.

Don't predicate the end result. Pottery is doing, not having done - when a pot is finished its value is in how well it expresses all the love and dedication you put into it - not the technique or usefulness, nor the good taste or modern idiom, yet some of all these will be in it. Don't compare it with others - it stands on its own foot - and incidentally it might make a good Xmas present for Aunt Amy.

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#### Huyghe School of Pottery Ltd.

When the editor asked for this article, a number of questions at once presented themselves. What should be the aim of a school such as this? What are its standards? Should it, for example, continue to accept beginners, or should it provide workshop facilities for more advanced students?

The school opened in 1966 to continue where the University of B.C. Extension Department, after fifteen years, simply left off. This meant that nearly a hundred students had nowhere to go. When the axe fell, a few student meetings were held where suggestions

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ranged from floating a share issue to a loosely-organized co-operative workshop. But there was no answer to the basic questions: Who would be in charge, who would do the work, who would be financially responsible? It became clear that there would be no spontaneous action. Everyone wanted to continue with pottery, but unless someone took hold, and quickly, nothing whatever would happen.

Hilda Ross had been in charge of the University Extension course, and I had been teaching, for the past three years. A business venture seemed the best approach, but the word "subsidy" had been muttered rather often in reference to this course. If the University with all its tax exemptions and other advantages could not make it pay, why did we think we could? Well, there were schools of music and dancing and karate, and they seemed to co-exist, but there was no well-organized school of pottery of any size, so we would not be entering a crowded market. We turned a deaf ear to the words "deficit operation" and a blind eye to the news item that appears with depressing monotony: "Small businesses accounted for the greatest number of failures in Canada ...".

Recklessly we incorporated ourselves as a company and applied for a bank loan, squeezing in just before money tightened and interest rates began to rise. The University sold us equipment not needed elsewhere. Then we set about looking for premises, and got more unnerved with every cavernous warehouse we saw. Commercial zoning was necessary and shops too expensive. Finally a word from a student made us look at 4430 West 10th Avenue, a tiny shop, but the back part developed all the way to the lane. There were two small rooms, kitchen, bathroom, and a vast dark area cluttered with furniture and junk. All the windows were boarded up, a single 25-watt lamp hung from the 11' high ceiling and we groped in the gloom. A long ramp and a large platform at the back door took care of the beer bottle business. In the floor were two large pits three feet deep, full of old cans and cartons. College Printers had occupied the place at one time and this was where the presses had been. No water, no heating, and termites chewing at the two-by-fours in the corner (they still are). I thought the place ideal everyone thought I was mad. But failing all else we went and

talked to the owner; yes, he would be prepared to rent the back part, and yes, he would consider a lease (this for us was a must). So far, so good. Next the City. Would they give us a licence to run a school at these premises? They came and saw. They wanted scale drawings in quadruplicate and estimates of the cost of alterations and of course more inspections. I prepared the scale plans and filled in forms and got estimates for installing water and two double sinks and heating and lighting and for the two inch gas pipe which had to run the entire length of the building. The gas supply was on 10th Avenue and the kiln, to meet regulations that the stack must be at least 20 feet from the nearest building, would be only eighteen inches from the lane. I went back to City Hall for more questions and answers. We got our building permit, the junk was cleared, and splendid daylight and sunlight sprang in as we uncovered the big windows down each side.

At this point I left for a family holiday in California, and while I was away Hilda did a heroic job of organizing the move from Acadia Camp to 10th Avenue. There was a staggering amount of sorting, discarding, dismantling, tying up, labelling, packing and so on. In Los Angeles I called on my potter friends, and one of them offered to drive me around to look at some kilns I knew about. Time was short. I bought a 16 cubic foot Alpine, but it was an act of faith because close inspection was nearly impossible. It was in Westwood's yard, and the yard was piled high in every direction with large cartons of summer school supplies. Then we went to a cafe equipment place and bought a used galvanized hood. I filled in customs forms and left my obliging friends to see to the shipment of the kiln and hood.

Back in Vancouver I found wheels, cupboards, shelves, supplies, chemicals and the incredible clutter of stuff dear to the heart of every potter piled up 10 feet high all along one side of our big room. Every day we climbed this mountain to wrestle down a set of shelves or a cupboard for which we had a spot ready. Students came to lend a hand. Every day we hammered, sawed, nailed, levered, rolled and shoved things into their places. It was exhilarating; we had a Crusoe-like consideration of each item tugged from the tangle and indeed this clay-spattered mess looked

6.



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6.

like a shipwreck. We knocked one wall out and move another a few feet to make a damp room. We had generous help in changing the ramp to a staircase, and in making wedging tables and installing lighting. There was a nice example of serendipity: in the Sun I found an advertisement for ten wooden lockers for \$50, they were at a hairdresser's on South Granville. I bought them; each would hold 5 shelves so they would take the tools etc. of fifty students. For the other 40, we turned some tall shelves sideways and looked hard at two 8-ft. high plywood beerbottles we'd inherited. That was it; we got a power saw and cut them up into locker doors and painted them orange and yellow - the ghostly legend of beer still faintly shows.

The kiln was on its way. A frantically urgent job was to fill the deep pits in the concrete floor. Friends recommended a cement man; he'd gone fishing. More telephoning, with only 3 days in which to get the job done, 3 more to let it set. The price was \$165 and the job only indifferently done, but at least the floor was whole. Our customs broker cleared the kiln; LASME would bring it to our door but not put it in the building, so I ordered a forklift and hoped everyone would be on time. They were; driving down 10th Ave. on the appointed day I spied our kiln and hood standing up like a juggernaut in a truck parked outside the coffee-shop. In a few minutes it was at our door. Then the forklift arrived, scooped up the kiln and crept down the slope to those providential double doors in the side of the building. Over the sill, and all 2 tons of it were set delicately down. Two men spent the next hour nudging it on small rollers along the floor. It came to the bog, the quicksand, the terra infirma - Hilda and I stopped breathing. Inch by inch it crossed that 10 feet and reached the safety of its chalk-mark near the wall.

The gas contractor came, installed the heating furnace and hooked up the kiln. The Provincial gas inspector came (anything over 400,000 BTU comes under Provincial regulations). He asked for one small alteration; when that was done he came back and put his sticker on. The plumber came, and the building inspector, and the fire inspector. We got our business licence. The Workmen's Compensation Board wanted our money and to know, so help us, how many blankets and bandages we had. We opened

accounts with B.C. Hydro who demanded \$80 deposit, and with the City for garbage collection and water - all these must be paid for in a commercial zone. By this time it was late August; we'd spent a lot of money, the day was rapidly approaching. We still worked every day painting, decorating the coffee room, organizing the glaze room, cleaning windows (they haven't been cleaned since), checking supplies. And Ross-Huyghe School of Pottery Ltd. opened on time, on September 22nd, 1966.

The University's formula always seemed to us a good one; twelve students in a class, twelve wheels. It doesn't do as a money-maker, but it works. Other things we changed: no more jars of glaze, crusty like old port and mostly unlabelled, cluttering every shelf in sight. No more glaze-spraying, a sure-fire cause of acrimony at the end of term. All pieces to be signed. And a limit to the number of pieces to be kept, to promote a more critical attitude among students to their work.

In the earlier Extension days, not much had been demanded of students. If they never progress beyond pie-dishes an inch thick, that was O.K. But slowly things improved; a variety of instructors, resident and visiting, brought and taught new skills, and by 1966 all students' sights could be set a lot higher. Our philosophy was that if people were joining the school to learn to work on the wheel, they were entitled to be taught thoroughly the basic skills, and in their turn expected to accept the discipline which technique demands. Class projects help; it is both interesting and instructive to see the various solutions students present in answer to a demand for, say, a footed textured planter, a thrown box, a coffeepot, a set of ramekins. Similarly, the limitation of glazes to 3 or 4 means that students learn to explore and control them through constant experience. Those people interested in glaze experiments can make them, but any successful results will be made up in quantity for general use. Students from beginners onwards are expected to take turns in making the batches of glaze, packing and unpacking kilns, making firing "biscuits". From time to time there is a special event - raku firings on the final day of class, or a group project such as the 4'x6' glazed sign that decorates the outside east wall of the building. On this one the students and instructor got an education in a larger piece of work than could be done during term time.

The school's 96 students include teachers, business men and women, high-schoolers, physiotherapists and so on in the evening. In the daytime there are university students, housewives, part-time workers - a fascinating cross-section of ages and interests. Most beginners arrive knowing next to nothing about clay, and some of them make astonishing progress. Others are slow starters to whom every cylinder is a challenge. One thing you learn, people are not the same and their responses to frustration or success vary according to temperament, attitude, the weather, state of health and so forth. Some have to be wound up and some unwound, and it's up to the instructor to perceive these often subtle differences and allow for them.

A look at the waiting list makes it clear that the school should accept beginners, 9 out of 10 are these. After a few years, and often sooner, many of the students make or buy a wheel, and make or buy a kiln. Then, having been well grounded in form, lids, feet, spouts, handles and lips, they are ready to begin to work on their own. At this point the creative ones can explore fresh directions; others go on improving their technique and begin to sell a line of standard items. The ideal would seem to be small groupings of those who own equipment, to share the lower cost of bulk supplies and perhaps a larger kiln.

It should be added that the paper work for a school of this size is not negligible. Advertising must be drafted and deadlines met. Registration forms drafted several times a year, duplicated, envelopes written, filled and stamped. Monthly bank statement to be checked and entered in the journal, income-tax and CPP deductions made and paid in, T4 slips prepared and sent to all instructors of the year. Annual forms to complete for City Licensing office, Workmen's Compensation Board, income-tax. Papers to be collected for annual audit. Supplies checked, ordered, and bills paid. And always, of course, there is the telephone and the waiting list to be maintained.

Hilda Ross retired last June and the school is now in its 4th year. There will be other schools in time, and they are badly needed in a city the size of Vancouver. Perhaps this account will provide a few guidelines to one approach which has been tried, successfully.

----- Avery Huyghe -----

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### Teaching in the Chicken House

I have taught ceramics, drawing, and design in the Vancouver School of Art, Community centres, open fields and summer schools over the last 5 years. Without exception there is always a lack of equipment or too many people using a given space in a day or both. Then the school administration likes to say "hullo" now and then. Or the janitor wants to leave early for a beer and hopes you'll do the same. Or would I mind firing 400 pieces of work by the kids in grade 7? Or could I give a 3 minute demonstration in the auditorium to a group of visiting mums on kiln construction? Or please don't smoke or ... in front of teenagers as we are trying to set a good example.

I reach for two reasons: I believe that man must share any abilities he may possess with his fellows; I also believe that eating and dwelling in comfort is desirable therefore I accept money for sharing any talents I may possess.

My studio (a converted chicken house) has 7 electric wheels (which a friend manufactures and are \$300 each), one dough mixer that keeps a constant supply of beautiful clay available; one 40 cu.ft. gas kiln and one 10 cu.ft. electric one; 2000ft. of floor space to allow comfortable movement of students and provide lots of storage; one telephone for making dates (325-8086) and all the tools necessary for beginners or advanced course. As a bonus the atmosphere is stimulating and makes one want to work.

I run evening courses Monday, Thursday and Friday, 3 hrs. each night, one night per week. For anyone who is a beginner or advanced and would like a 6 hr. day course to start them or refresh them, I do that on a one day or more basis depending on student requirements.

Pottery is fun even in a Chicken House!

Don Hutchinson  
8514 Ash St., Vancouver 14, B.C.

(Pottery is FUN - ESPECIALLY in a Chicken House. Ed.)

## DAVID'S PAGE

In looking at the Guild and what it is and what it does several very important things become apparent. The machinery of how the Guild operates as a group was formed over a period of 24 years. Some of the rules and laws are good, valid and do work. Some which are and were being used are in the light of 1969-70 not good, not valid and do not work.

My point in accepting the job of President of the Guild for 69/70 was to be able to help change and put into effect new machinery which in conjunction with the old would help to give motif and life to the Guild for, I hope, the next 20 years. We cannot expect that laws and rules will continue to move the Guild without constant supervision and changes made when it becomes apparent that something is not working. 20 years is a long time and we must motivate the members of the Guild, who are you and me, that the Guild is a living thing, and to live must think. The members of the Guild, as a whole, are the body, the executive is the brain. The body cannot live without the brain and the brain is helpless without the body and dies. There must be some communication between the brain and the body. The brain and the body make a person, a unit, a whole. We, as members, must come to regard and understand the fact that we are a single unit with all sections of that unit operating effectively for the common, the unit good.

With the passage of time, not too long as you will see, some conditions come to be regarded as tradition. Look at the effect of suggesting that we drop the Hycroft sale. It has become in five annual sales as much a tradition as royalty, church and mother. It means the body is not operating properly and the supply of blood, interest, is being cut off to the brain. It means death of a unit to allow this to happen. When the executive, the brain, come to regard themselves as the Guild and the members general as something of a nuisance then there is developing a condition known medically as schitzophrenzia.

When members refuse to speak on matters which they feel important but simply do not go to meetings, do not think about what could be done to correct something which is not going right, will not offer



themselves for positions on the executive, what can one say except that there must be a blockage in an artery of communication.

I do not say that all of these things have happened as definitive things upon which you can put your finger. They happen in modified form from time to time. As this last year when we had a slate of officers proposed and accepted with no questions. When there is a feeling of being left out and not consulted about what to you and me are important matters. What do we do about it, you and me? We let George or Helen do it because they want to do it. We then hope they can manage and forget it. The ones handling the jobs ask for help and one of their fellow members on the executive helps out. After a while the numbers of working members and helping members is reduced to a bare minimum. If you will think back, as ordinary members, you and me, to what has been done in the last 10 years you can see that while much was accomplished by few people there had grown a feeling that the ordinary member did not care and would not help and the position of a member of the executive was not to be envied.

My object in doing the work, was to build a channel of communication between all the members, to aid in the thing, that we belong to the Guild for.

I have made changes in executive and responsibilities of executive and have suggested several changes in thinking about the Guild and the function of a Guild. Newsletters and meetings every month are building lines of communication. Questions asked by interested members lead us to our future members of executive. We will be doing things that some members will not agree with. I expect to hear from these members. I expect to hear from them by voice and by letter and I would like to hear from them in the pages of the WESTERN POTTER. Do not keep a gripe to yourself or just to your friends, but let me know about it too. If it is valid then something will be done about it. If it is not valid then watch out. I would keep a weather eye out for squalls if I were the members.

We are going to be trying out a number of new things from time to time and asking for the comments of members. Let your opinions be known. From year to year the WESTERN POTTER

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would print up request for information and things. If two members answered, this was thought to be very good. It also says there are a lot of dead minds cruising around and this does not do the Potters Guild one bit of good. Write letters, ask questions, make it known that you are alive and kicking. Raise hell! The Guild will begin to operate at the high level of which it is capable and we will all benefit. Let's GO.

David Lambert

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## THE VISUAL ARTS CENTRE . . . A DREAM FOR 1971?

### History

With the creation of The Visual Arts Centre, the Potter's Club of Montreal has realized a long-standing dream - the opportunity of offering interested craftsmen a total approach to all phases of design, plastics and ceramic art.

The history of The Visual Arts Centre dates back to 1946 when eight charter members founded the Potter's Club. They launched the club with two major objectives in mind: to provide space and equipment for potters and to stimulate interest in ceramic art.

Public interest in the project began to grow. Within a year, the club's first studio was obsolete. Larger quarters were sought and the club moved as it did on three more occasions until settling in 1962 in its present location on Victoria Avenue in Westmount.

Today the Potter's Club consists of a two-storey house which combines studios, classrooms and a large exhibition room. The Visual Arts Centre will continue the tradition of the Potter's Club in expanding its facilities and services in line with the demands of the contemporary creative scene.

### Objectives

The Visual Arts Centre will centralize all the activities of the Potter's Club as well as expand into entirely new areas -- design, plastics, and drawing and art for children.

The Centre will aim to develop new, more exciting craftsmen, working with a variety of contemporary materials and integrating them freely in bold and inventive ways.

In initiating this new program, the Potter's Club will become the first media group working within the confines of the new Centre, with their own studio. As the Centre grows, it is hoped other media groups will be formed in plastics, design or weaving, all with their own studio space.

In order to introduce the craftsman to an ever-increasing wealth of new materials and approaches, the Centre has assembled qualified teachers with experience and university affiliations. The student will have the opportunity of attending both clay and non-clay classes as well as learning the possibilities of merging and combining one with others -- plastics with clay, clay with design and design with plastics.

The Visual Arts Centre will give courses in both English and French and will include lectures, work-shops and an exhibition gallery.


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## BOOKS

The search for information is a continuing one and the book that seems good at one stage will seem trivial at another. But in time one collects as many as one can that seem to be important - some technical, some satisfying for other reasons, on aesthetics, philosophy, nature. Here is a list dealing directly with pottery which I own and enjoy; if you have some that you like send me a list for the next issue.

The Alpha and Omega of my library is: "A Potters Book" by  
Bernard Leach. Faber & Faber.

This was my first book on the subject and its worn and admittedly dirty state bears witness, eloquently, to its continual use. It combines the stated philosophic approach to his art by one of the world's leading artists with much practical advice and technical instruction. Written with clarity and simplicity, it is understood by the beginner and appreciated more as time goes on. This is the first book to buy - it will teach you to see and understand as well as to do.



"Clay and Glazes for the Potter" by Daniel Rhodes. Pitmans.  
A basic textbook full of invaluable information and fundamental knowledge. Again my copy is worn and read and re-read. A useful collection of glaze recipes and various tables on which to base further exploration.

With these two books one is well equipped but I like all these as well, finding that where one is weak another is strong:

"The Technique of Pottery" by Dora Billington. Batsford.  
Repeats much of the information in the other two but has a useful chapter on handles, lids and mould making. I've found the glaze recipes reliable and the book is simply written so that even the glaze theory is easily understood.

"Understanding Pottery Glazes" by David Green. Faber & Faber.  
This has been invaluable though it took me some time to begin to understand it. No recipes - good bibliography, tables etc. Not a first book but one that becomes increasingly important and interesting.

"Slipware and How to Make It" by Dorothy Kemp. Faber & Faber.  
A simply written book on a specialized subject unfortunately unfashionable in B.C. at the moment.

"The World of Japanese Ceramics" by Herbert Saunders.  
Kodansha International.  
Owing to greedy friends I've only had this book for a month though I bought it a year ago. It's fascinating and gives an increased understanding of the techniques and history of Japanese pots and potters. It also has some glaze recipes but I've not tried any of them - there are Occidental equivalents for the traditional Japanese glazes for those who don't feel like grinding their pigments for 7 years or laying down clay for their descendants. Beautifully and copiously illustrated.

The next books are not primarily technical - the lessons are there to be learnt however;

"A Potters Work" by Bernard Leach. Kodansha International.  
"Medieval English Pottery" by Bernard Rackham. Faber & Faber.  
"Creative Clay Craft" by Ernst Rotterger. Batsford  
A wonderful little book with an intriguing, exploring attitude to clay.

An imaginative way to begin which needs little equipment beyond an alive and enquiring mind.

"Papago Indian Pottery" by Bernard Fontana etc. University of Washington Press.

Magazines:

Ceramics Monthly.

Craft Horizons. 44 West 53rd St., New York, New York 10019.

Pottery Quarterly. Northfields Studio. Tring Herts, England.

Gillian Hodge.

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The Monthly Meetings are covered by the newsletter but just in case we have overlooked anything I will put in a short report on them.

16.10.69.

Iris Smith reported that some of the time was taken with the details of Hycroft. The monthly workshops for Saturday afternoons were discussed and the problem of the B.C. Government demand that only trained teachers be allowed to give workshops. Ruth Meechan and Gene Barker read a letter in which they expressed their feeling that the Potters Guild was undemocratically run - and were promptly put on the constitution committee.

November

Richard Groom gave an illustrated talk with slides on the Mingea pottery of Japan. He gave a very complete picture of this aspect of Japanese life and set one's knowledge of the pottery in the context of the other crafts. And made one long to go there before it all disappears.

December

Ho-Ho-Ho and we had a jolly party.

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## HYCROFT

The Hycroft Pottery Sale this year had several ideas implemented which contributed to its success. It is suggested that in future

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Wayne Ager

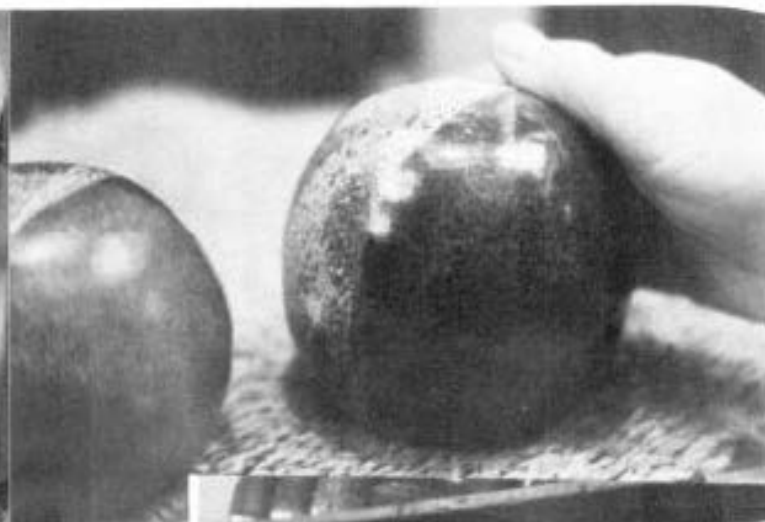
Ph. David Jance





# ROGUES GALLERY

Don Hutchinson  
 Julie Cowie  
 Joanne Polberg  
 Kathy Hanchard  
 David Lambert  
 Alice Bradbury  
 Leona Bush  
 Louise Huff





Jan & Helga Grove  
Sooke Road Studio

years we can draw on these ideas, enlarge and expand them and, possibly, these successful sales.

A meeting was held in the home of Julie Cowie in September to start the planning of the sale. Ten people attended, selected at random and they acted as sounding boards for the ideas of the organizer and co-organizer. A few days later the chairman and co-chairman held another meeting and arranged all the ideas into working order.

The first decision was to make money on the sale. The second, that every effort would be made to involve as many people as possible. The organization was divided into areas of responsibility with section heads.

Treasurer - Kathy Hanchard. Responsible for all money and costs.

- Ensure change available.
- Ensure protection by Insurance policy.
- Pay janitor.
- Ensure rent payments are completed.
- Summarize sale with record of entry numbers, numbers of pots, costs, profits etc.

Transportation and Set-up. Don Hutchinson.

- Lumber, bricks, lights, modules, paper etc.
- Set up, cover modules, install lights, move furniture, take down and clear up.
- Receive out-of-town pots.

Publicity. Judy Clegg.

- Dates: Friday, Nov. 21st, 6.00 - 10.00 p.m.  
Saturday, Nov. 22nd, 10.00 a.m. - 7.00 p.m.
- Hycroft Manor, 1487 McRae, Vancouver.
- Circulars: Mail out invitations to each member 3 weeks ahead of show.
- Posters distributed  $1\frac{1}{2}$  months before show.
- Circular includes letter saying number of pots, what is acceptable, marking, delivery, method of identifying sets, sale times, guild commission one week deadline.
- Poster design (Byron Johnstad) silkscreened by members in advance - 1000 minimum.
- Radio, TV, local newspapers and small newspapers.

Policy Committee. Julie Cowie and Don Hutchinson.

- Entry fee: \$3.00.
- Individual & group displays
- Gallery advertising on walls
- Entry form requirements
- Deadline dates
- Auction of work (donation of 1 pot per member)
- Consider location of sale
- Tags for workers saying "I'm a member" - Ellen Chamberlain
- Bills, paper bags etc. plus teams for both days
- Set up exhibit area
- Choice - 10 or so pots
- Coffee & refreshments
- Consider hosts & hostesses
- Exhibition display & prizes
- Number of pots
- Commissions, penalties
- Better control on sales and marking
- Push for memberships
- Consider idea of festival, more fun
- Selling Teams - Leona Bush
- Exhibition - Bonnie and Byron Johnson
- One pot allowed per member
- Set standards for show

Checking. Alice Bradbury and Joanne Polberg.

- Check pots in and out
- Make members comply with rules.

(Photos of most of these stalwarts in centre page. Ed.)

Letter for WESTERN POTTER sent to inform members of organization by October. Plans for sale, etc.

Meeting of membership. Speech made as "pep-talk" to prime people for action and get volunteers. List of names made which was sent to each section head so they could draw on willing workers for assistance.

Notes for Julie and Don:

- People part of team.
- Establish goals in their minds, picture unwinds for their efforts.
- Indicate progress as result of efforts.
- Use volunteers for ideas and imagination, encourage responsibility and involvement.
- Allow members the right to affect organization.
- More males required for setting up and taking down.
- Consider idea of losing money if enthusiasm wanes.
- Enthusiasm could be generated for coming years.
- Costumes for hostesses.



List of stores selling members work  
Consider stricter jurying by members of their work.  
Consider new location for next year  
How about mug bar, garden shop, kitchen centre?  
Information booth for public with names of potters, books,  
etc.  
More space required behind cashiers' desks for workers.  
Consider wrapping area and cashier area in different location.  
Bigger labels. Could Guild supply these?  
All packaging to be removed after pots are checked in.  
Imperative that pots are picked up at proper time.  
Consider the display being done by women, the selling by men.

The above information explains how the sale was organized and suggests improvements. To all the members who assisted directly and indirectly in this event we extend a warm and grateful "Thank you". The sale was good because many people helped, not just two or three.

Don Hutchinson. Julie Cowie.

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## DISTRICT NEWS:

### Okanagan Valley News

A group of Okanagan potters held a very successful and good-looking show in Kelowna just before Christmas. The members took over a private gallery and filled it with pots; the walls being the exception. However, said walls were hung with broad brush drawings by one of the potters, Frank Poll of Vernon. Taking part were: Poll, Loane, Compton, Kingsmill and Hatfield. Public reaction and resulting sales were most encouraging.

Our editor has just asked me to review Daniel Rhodes' book, "Kilns, Design, Construction and Operation".

Perhaps I would have reviewed it more vigorously last summer when, while actually kiln building, I was pouring over every page in an effort to discover information which sometimes wasn't quite there or decipher drawings which seemed to lack a crucial detail. Ex. "As shown in Fig. 72, oil escapes through small orifice at A, air



enters at B and they mix and exit at C". Trouble is, A, B and C, are not marked on said drawing.

This week, however, I am stirring festive cooking with one hand and picking up pen with the other and feeling somewhat more friendly toward the book. In retrospect, it gave useful general guide lines and photos for building a downdraft kiln, as it does in regard to many other types of kilns. And as Rhodes points out, he is not attempting to deal in absolute or specific instructions for the building of any specific kiln. Items such as types of arch bricks and their sizes, critical dimension in downdraft kilns and patterns of circulation all contribute sound, helpful information.

The book is grouped into four sections: 1. The Development of Kilns. 2. The Design and Construction of Kilns. 3. The Operation of Kilns. 4. Kiln Designs. I find the first section, the historical aspect of kilns, the strongest in the book, partly due to the wonderful collection of photographs. It would make the text very worthwhile for a teacher who intends dealing with the history of our craft and would be a fine way to encourage students in the building of simple kilns for varied and experimental firings. And no matter how knowledgable you are already, you can enjoy the great sculptural quality of the oriental kilns so amply illustrated.

Frances Hatfield

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#### Letter from Victoria

Sub-title: USING LEAD IN YOUR GLAZE ?

Recently the Victoria Colonist reprinted an article from Ottawa under the headline: Glaze on Pottery Possible Killer. Its contents read: The consumer affairs department warned Friday that the use of hand-crafted pottery as a container for fruit juices or other foods may cause lead poisoning. Lead poisoning has recently taken the life of a child in Canada, the department said in a statement, and all evidence points to the glaze on handmade pottery as the source of the lead. Poisoning is caused when lead in the glaze of the pottery, much of it made in the Maritimes, is absorbed into liquids or other foods, the statement said. The

Department emphasized that the type of pottery involved should not be confused with harmless chinaware.

So far the message from Ottawa. Mr. Don Collins from the Colonist called me the same evening he got this information for a brief opinion on the subject which he partly used in his article accompanying the above release from Ottawa. Maybe Mr. Collins emphasized a little too much on my remark that the unexperienced hobbyist, working with glazes, might often not realize the danger involved for himself and users of his products by introducing lead compounds. As a result of this I had many upset voices calling me with many questions about the why, and what to do about it. Therefore I feel that a short summary of causes and precautions to be taken, might help those who are not sure.

To set it right in front: General explanations about handling lead compounds will be found in each halfways useable book about pottery making, usually in the description of the various materials for glaze composing.

A few additions out of my own memory and experience might give further enlightenment. For the beginner again: All lead oxides are toxic! The red, the yellow and the white.

This sentence sounds stupid, but it has to be said over and over again. Nearly all the students I have had since I am here, some of them already potting for long, were convinced that the white lead, which is frequently used, was non-toxic. Probably this idea came up because it looked so innocent white.

The best way to avoid glaze poisoning for the potter, and also the user of the potters pots, is to use lead frits, if lead has to be used at all. These frits, if right composed, are non-toxic. Poisoning only can happen when lead is dissolved in weak acids. So it is not only the potter who swallows his lead compounds and digests it with his stomach acid, but also the user of the articles turned out for food use covered with a lead-giving glaze.

Already at the end of the last century several European countries proclaimed the "Lead Law", saying that a glaze shall not give any lead after being cooked for half an hour in vinegar solution of 4%; this is about normal household vinegar.

A new version of this law says to leave the glazed ware for 24 hours in 4% vinegar, after this period no more than 3 milligrams Pb must be dissolved from 100 square centimeter glaze surface.

Often the impression is given that the higher the proportion of silica to lead is, the less soluble the lead will be. This comprehension may result out of the names of lead frits, mainly known as "Monosilicate" and "Bisilicate". Tests which have been performed by several laboratories came to the following results:

Pbo . 1.5	SiO <sub>2</sub> = 10.4 %	dissolved lead	
Pbo . 1.75	SiO <sub>2</sub> = 6.7 %	"	"
Pbo . 2.00	SiO <sub>2</sub> = 7.0 %	"	"
Pbo . 2.25	SiO <sub>2</sub> = 3.3 %	"	"
Pbo . 2.50	SiO <sub>2</sub> = 3.0 %	"	"
Pbo . 2.75	SiO <sub>2</sub> = 3.3 %	"	"
Pbo . 3.00	SiO <sub>2</sub> = 3.3 %	"	"
Pbo . 3.25	SiO <sub>2</sub> = 5.1 %	"	"
Pbo . 3.50	SiO <sub>2</sub> = 13.7 %	"	"
Pbo . 3.75	SiO <sub>2</sub> = 25.8 %	"	"

We see from this row that the proportion of Pbo . 2.50 SiO is the ideal. A pure lead glass or frit can be traced easily by its colour, which is yellowish on a white background, like white clay for instance, as long as free (and herewith easy soluble in weak acids) lead is present. This appears in the glass "Monosilicate", where we find a distinctive yellowish tint. The "Bisilicate" shows a white glass, especially as a small amount of Alumina oxide is added for an even safer compounding of this frit.

To make the safe use of lead compounds absolutely sure, only the bisilicate should find entrance in the products of a novice in glaze making. Besides this step of using bisilicate, the finished glaze should contain at least the permissible amount of Calcium carbonate, and if possible, an addition of Alkalies will do further good towards insolubility of lead sources in glazes.

Where a professional is using raw lead compounds, he always will apply great precautions in handling the stuff, and make sure his endproduct is either safe for food use, or there is no

chance it will ever be used for food.

Great care should be taken in using chromred or uraniumred glazes. Besides lead compounds there are other toxic materials as most Antimony compounds, except for the Antimonypentoxide. Antimony containing glazes are prohibited for food containers in Belgium and several South American countries. Barium compounds are heart poisons and should be handled with care.

In general, avoid dust in your glaze room, spray glazes under adequate spraying booth and/or with a mask, be careful not to breathe in the fumes of your kiln over a long period, keep kiln room good ventilated when working in it during the firing or shortly thereafter.

This warning for the glazemaker: Do not lick your fingers while mixing glazes - it's certainly no sugar.

With best wishes for healthy potting in 1970 and coming years.

Jan Grove

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### Cariboo Pottery Society

The Cariboo Pottery Society adopted a plan of holding monthly meetings this fall, with several of the members talking and demonstrating on various aspects. Ruth Flower gave an excellent talk on the effects of temperatures on clays and glazes, and at the following meeting, Johann Dormaar spoke about glazing, with emphasis on study of the pot before selecting decoration and glaze.

Anna Roberts demonstrated on the wheel for the benefit of the new members.

In November, the Society together with the Cariboo Art Society, sponsored a show of paintings and pottery by Martin Place. Martin is a native of the Cariboo, he had studied under Zeliko Kujundzic and is now at U.B.C. He has built his own kiln and worked hard all summer, achieving some good results with reduction firing.

The testing of local clays and slips begun at the workshop in August is still going on, and the kiln for club members use has



arrived. We unfortunately are temporarily without a home, as the property on which the studio was located was recently sold, and although the School Board have offered us accommodation in the old school dormitory currently being converted into a Resource Centre, it will not be ready for sometime. We are most grateful to Mr. and Mrs L. Milner for the use of their building over the past two years; it made the foundation of the society possible.

It has been agreed that, whenever funds become available, we should purchase books for a Library for the use of members. Members were asked to suggest books which they feel would be beneficial to the club.

P. H. Mahon

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### Helga and Jan Grove

The studio of Jan and Helga Grove is at 2218 Sooke Rd., Victoria, B.C., but much mud passed over many wheels before they established themselves there some 5 years ago. Born in Hamburg, Germany, the son of a potter and sculpter, Jan had an early start in the world of ceramics. For 8 years he studied in his parents' studio in Lubeck and graduated in 1956 as a master potter from the Fine Arts Academy in Stuttgart, Germany. Before leaving his homeland in 1960, he had been employed as a designer in several pottery studios, operated his own studio and was appointed Master Assessor of the Examination Committee for the pottery crafts of the Chamber of Trade in Lubeck and Flensburg.

In commenting on the mural commissions he worked on with his parents, Jan points out that by law, in several European countries, 2% of the total cost of a new civic building has to be spent on some form of art work such as sculpture, paintings, etc., thus encouraging and supporting the art community.

By 1960 Jan had not only gained much experience in the world of ceramics, he'd also gained a wife and family. Prior to their marriage, Helga had studied at the senior Grove studio in Lubeck for 3 years, graduating as an assistant of Art Pottery. From there she went to study at the School of Textile design in Krafeld, Germany, under Professor George Muche, a teacher of

28.

the former "Bauhaus", becoming a certified designer in 1952. Following their marriage, Helga worked as a designer for ceramic decoration in several pottery studios and factories in West Germany and with Jan in their studio in Lubeck. 1960 saw the Groves transplanted to Turkey where Jan was head of the ceramics department of the school for Applied Fine Arts in Istanbul.

"Everyone involved with the arts should go at some time to Turkey, this crossroads of humanity, where for centuries cultures have met and mingled and left their mark". Apart from acquiring another language and another child, these 5 years had a marked influence on their work. For Jan this showed in the development of different pot shapes while Helga's glaze decoration reflected the Asian surroundings. It was also a time for learning about and adjusting to the use of new materials, ideas and standards - a rich experience. However, the Groves were not settled and moved to Canada in 1965.

Here in the new world they have found yet another whole approach to their work and the past 5 years are making their mark. No longer is their work precisely European or strongly Asian but rather Canadian while still being distinctly Grove.

Jan and Helga are among the few serious potters in this part of the world who devote full time to their art and their finished pieces are, to a large extent, an harmonious joint effort, Jan producing the thrown pieces while Helga contributes the often intricate glaze design. It is usually only for show purposes that Helga throws her own pots, preferring, instead, to produce the sculptural hand build pieces.

They share, too, some definitely and unfortunately true observations on the attitude of Canadians as a whole to the arts. "Here art tends to be looked upon as a hobby rather than a way of life". "In Europe the guild system ensures that art will not be mistaught." "You cannot sell work until you are a master. Unfortunately here anyone with the slightest knowledge or experience may not only sell but teach, spreading poor technique and bad taste."

Since 1958 much of Jan and Helga's work has been displayed in major shows throughout Europe, Canada and Mexico, while several pieces have found their way into private permanent collections



such as the Department of External Affairs, the Confederation Art Gallery, Charlottetown and the Greater Victoria Art Gallery. In the 5 years they have been here the Groves have made considerable inroads into the Canadian ceramic field and on Sooke Road you will not only find a thriving pottery but warm hospitality, enthusiasm in the future and a place where the home thrown coffee pot never runs dry.

Pam Hansen, Ladysmith.

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## A SUMMER LEFTOVER . . .

Bryan Newman's Workshop -  
Portland, Oregon, July 1969.

Held at Portland School of Arts & Crafts, an old renovated hospital, housing departments of Pottery, Art, metal sculpture and a whole floor devoted to hand-loom weaving (50 looms).

Instructor was Bryan Newman, currently teaching at Bath Academy of Art and Harrow Art School, London, England, assisted by George Cumming, resident pottery instructor at Portland School of Arts & Crafts.

I attended the first of two sessions, each one having 15 pupils. At our session there were 11 Oregonians and 4 Canadians. There were 2 ladies from Victoria (whose names have slipped my mind), Marjorie Roberts from Courtenay and myself from Port Alberni, so as you see, B.C. and especially Vancouver Island, were well represented. I was deeply impressed with Mr. Newman's ability, both on the wheel and with his excitingly different handbuilt pottery. Apparently effortlessly, he produced the most spontaneous pots, large and small in quick succession. Great attention was paid to handles, knobs and the more functional aspects of pottery, i.e. tableware etc. Bryan's pots, jugs and casseroles were meant for use; marvellous strap handles, generous spouts and lid-knobs that you could really grab, even through an oven mitt.

This was my first introduction to reduction firing and after experiencing the depth of reduction glazes, I am finding it hard to return to the rather unexciting surfaces of glazes fired in my own  
30.

electric kiln. I know that I was not alone in this feeling; Marjorie Roberts rushed home, bought a book on building gas kilns and has, I understand, been reading it day and night and has now started building.

The local Oregonians were most kind in driving us around town to visit among other things, the Contemporary Crafts Gallery, the University Ceramics Department and the Pacific Stoneware Pot Shop.

Never in my life have I been exposed to so many pots! Marjorie and I returned to Canada by bus, tired and happy, clutching our "Original Works of Art" packed in whisky cartons. This raised a few eyebrows at the Customs but we must have looked like innocent types; they let us through without unpacking them.

It was a wonderful summer workshop, getting together with nice folks in a common interest, sharing ideas and recipes, learning new techniques, what more could any potter ask for?

Elspeth Watson

---

#### WAYNE NGAN AT HANDCRAFT HOUSE

In December the Handcraft House hosted a show of Wayne Ngan's latest work and as usual it was a very good representation of this artist's varied avenues of exploration.

Raku was strongly featured in this show with many large pieces demonstrating his fine Raku body and strong glazing technique. The Raku teabowls were exceptionally well executed as they really showed off Mr. Ngan's sense of style and feeling for the bowl shape.

Several big bellied, small mouthed stoneware vases were especially exciting, as they seemed to catch and contain their moment of creation by virtue of their swollen stoppered shapes.

It was the stoneware bowls, however, that were the most appealing in the show, for in the bowl Mr. Ngan really finds his most fluid avenue of expression. They have a sensuality and charisma about them that takes one out of the mundane and into the ethereal, and this, together with his sure and bold approach to brushwork, gives us a fine feeling of where Mr. Ngan's head is at.

The sculptured pieces were pleasing with their noded and sprouting forms, and although possibly not completely resolved, they make their statements as thought pieces quite effectively.

Some interesting wall pieces were also shown and we saw here that Mr. Ngan is ever searching out the personality of his medium, while at the same time searching within himself through his approach to clay. As when any artist extends himself, they were tremulous in their grasp of what they were as a statement but quite real in their concept.

Mr. Ngan seems to be ever reaching out for stimulation and applying it very sensitively in his own work and this made for a very exciting and sparkling show indeed.

Shirley J. Coan

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A Group of Alberta Potters convened on the 6th December, 1969, to consider the formation of a Provincial Association of potters. At the end of the day's meeting, guide lines had been laid down by the general attendance and committees for the north and south of the Province appointed. These committees will draft all the documents necessary to present a proposed association to an assembly of Alberta potters to be convened in Calgary at a date to be announced later.

The committees wish to express their appreciation to the potters present for their valuable contributions and their thanks to the Edmonton Art Gallery for hosting their inaugural meeting.

---

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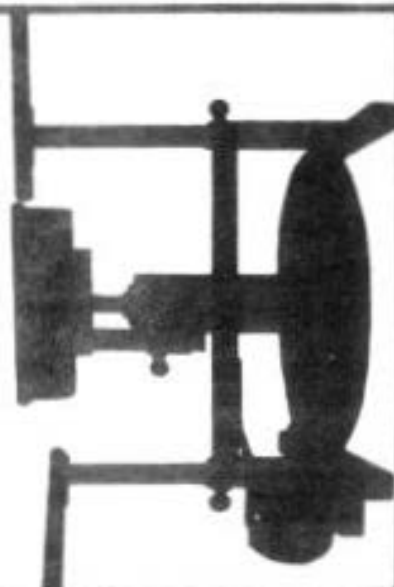
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Note: Permission should be requested from the B.C. Potters' Guild  
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The B.C.Potters' Guild is a society of potters and ceramics  
throughout the Province, whose endeavour is:-

1. To join together in meetings and discussions for mutual advantage.
2. To promote exhibitions of members' work.
3. To collaborate with other groups of potters and other craftsmen.
4. To endeavour to continue improving the standards of ceramic work.
5. To carry on activities of an artistic, educational or social  
character for our members.
6. To publish a quarterly magazine, "The WESTERN POTTER".

Past activities have included annual demonstration type workshops by  
master craftsmen. Lectures and slide and film showings have been  
organized on a regular basis. For the past two years the Guild has  
published a quarterly magazine, "The WESTERN POTTER" with the object  
of educating and informing on matters of interest to potters.

Anyone interested in pottery and ceramics is invited to join the  
B.C.Potters' Guild.

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